



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - December 5, 2002

- ***In the West***, yesterday's rain and snow showers boosted topsoil moisture in some ***Northwestern*** winter wheat fields, but consistent precipitation is needed in upcoming weeks to significantly improve crop prospects. Widespread precipitation has not fallen across the ***West*** since November 7-9, maintaining concerns about limited irrigation reserves, meager mountain snow packs, and drought-stressed rangelands.
- ***On the Plains***, cool, dry weather prevails throughout the region. Recent rain and snow on the ***southern Plains*** improved soil moisture for pastures and winter grains, but many wheat fields on the ***northern and central High Plains*** remain dry and would benefit from a protective snow cover.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, very cold weather is maintaining stress on ***Midwestern*** livestock, but a snow cover in the ***lower Great Lakes region*** is helping to protect winter wheat from exposure to low temperatures.
- ***In the South***, cool, dry air is overspreading areas from the ***Delta westward***, following the first soaking rainfall in nearly a month. Meanwhile, parts of the ***interior South*** are recovering from the recent snow and ice storm that caused fieldwork, travel, and electrical disruptions. Winter storm warnings for additional snow and ice accumulations remain in effect from the ***southern Appalachians into the Mid-Atlantic region***.

Outlook: The first significant winter storm of the season will continue to generate snow, sleet, and freezing rain in the ***Mid-Atlantic States and Northeast*** through this evening. Meanwhile, showers will accompany a cold front along the ***Southeast Coast and Florida***. Elsewhere, dry weather will prevail across the ***Plain States, Rockies, and West Coast***. Another surge of arctic air will likely move south into the ***Great Lakes*** during the weekend. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for December 10-14 features below-normal precipitation in the ***northern Rockies and Plains*** and in the ***upper Midwest***, while above-normal precipitation is forecast along the ***Gulf Coast and southern Mid-Atlantic***. Below-normal temperatures are forecast for the ***western Gulf Coast***, while above-normal temperatures are expected across the ***northern half of the U.S.***

Contact: Mark Brusberg, Agricultural Meteorologist, USDA/OCE/WAOB, Washington, D.C. (202-720-3508)